



US 8 Environmental Impact Statement Frequently asked questions and answers as of June 4, 2003



1. What is happening on US 8?

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is in the middle of a four-year corridor study that will result in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the study corridor beginning at WIS 35 North and extending 40 miles to US 53. The purpose of the study is to provide for safer, more convenient travel along this highway.

2. What is the project schedule?

Corridor studies take a number of years to complete because of the extensive information gathering, analysis, and agency and public involvement activities that must take place. The following is a summary of the project schedule:

- **December 2000 – June 2003** The US 8 corridor was selected for study, WisDOT engaged the services of the consultant team, project needs were identified, and conceptual alternatives were developed and presented to the public.
- **June 2003 – July 2004** Refined alternatives will be presented to the public in June 2003, and the draft EIS document will be completed and presented to the public for comment at a Public Hearing in July 2004.
- **December 2004** – The Final EIS will take public comment into consideration and preferred alternatives will be named.
- **2004-2006** – The Transportation Projects Commission (TPC) will consider the project for enumeration (funding) by the State Legislature. A number of major projects were considered by the TPC in 2002, but the TPC delayed action on recommending any enumeration funding. These projects will likely be considered again in 2004. As a result, the TPC may not consider the US 8 corridor until 2006.
- **2012** – If the TPC recommends enumeration for US 8, WisDOT believes that 2012 is the earliest time construction on a portion of US 8 could begin.

3. What refinements have been made to the project alternatives since the last public information meeting held in February 2003?

The US 8 corridor has been shifted slightly south in the Deer Lake area to avoid a historic site and reduce the number of relocations. Most homes and businesses on both the north and south sides of existing US 8 in this area will be preserved by using the existing highway as a frontage road. Access to the frontage road from the new US 8 would be provided via WIS 35 North and at 160th Street. 170th Street would have access to the new US 8 as a “T” intersection from the south.

Alternative 4, the “Through Town” alignment of US 8 was shifted north between Upper and Lower Turtle Lake to avoid major farm impacts.

4. Where can I view maps of the areas potentially affected by the proposed project?

Local officials from the towns and communities along the corridor have copies of the maps showing alternatives.

Information is also available on the project Web site: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/d8/eis/index.htm

A local contact, Mark Kohler, of the SEH/Rice Lake office, phone (715) 236-4000, also has copies of the area maps and is available to meet with citizens.

5. I was not able to attend the public meetings. How can my opinions be heard? How can I obtain more information?

Your thoughts and comments on the proposed US 8 project are very important. Public comments are a major factor considered in reaching a final decision, as is the input of other involved state and federal agencies. We encourage you to attend the public hearings and participate in the process.

A public hearing will be held midsummer 2004 once the Draft EIS has been made available for review and prior to completion of the final EIS.

The US 8 project Web site (www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/d8/eis/index.htm) contains information regarding project status, scheduled public meetings or hearings, and mapping. Project contact information is shown below.

6. Is money available to build the roadway?

At this point funding has not been secured for actual roadway improvements. The earliest the US 8 EIS will be presented to the TPC is in fall of 2004 or potentially in 2006. The TPC has the responsibility of considering whether the project should be recommended for enumeration (funding) by the State Legislature. When a study is enumerated, engineering and right-of-way acquisition may proceed and be followed by construction. With the current state budget concerns, there are many corridor projects that will be competing for enumeration dollars in 2004 and beyond. When US 8 is enumerated, construction could begin within six years.

7. Which segment of the proposed project would be built first?

At this point in the study, it is difficult to predict which segment would be built first. One of the items WisDOT will consider includes the prioritization of needs along the 40-mile corridor. Also, building a segment with no logical connection to the existing system is less desirable than constructing a segment that has a connection to what exists and would immediately improve the traffic pattern and flow. Public opinion on this issue is also a factor in this decision.

8. If WisDOT must acquire my house, business, or farm in order to complete the project, what will happen to me, and when?

Decisions on what property WisDOT must acquire for right-of-way cannot be made at this time because final alignments have not been selected. If the recommendation of the TPC for project enumeration is obtained at the end of this study, detailed design engineering will begin on the segment of US 8 prioritized as needing immediate improvement. Once detailed engineering is underway, the project team will have specific information on the actual road design and alignment. Based on the conditions discussed above, and assuming a construction start in 2012, relocation acquisitions in a prioritized segment would be confirmed by 2009. If you have questions about WisDOT's policies on property acquisition or relocations, WisDOT's real estate specialist, Karen Rask (715-392-7931), is available to answer your questions.

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